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THE POPE'S APPEAL FOR PEACE

On July 28 Pope Benedict XV issued the following appeal for peace to the peoples now fighting and to their chiefs. The support of the great Catholic Church in the cause of international righteousness is much needed by the cause we aim to promote.—THE EDITOR.

WHEN WE, however unworthy, were called to succeed that most tender Pontiff, Pius X, on the Apostolic Throne—Pius X, whose saintly beneficent life was cut short by grief at the fratricidal strife just broken out in Europe—We cast a trembling glance round Us at the bloodstained fields of battle, and We felt the anguish of a father who sees his house devastated, his people homeless, through some furious hurricane. And thinking, with Our heart inexpressibly stricken, of Our young sons who have been cut off by death in thousands, We felt in Our heart, filled with the love of Christ, all the shock of mothers and wives prematurely widowed, the inconsolable grief of children too soon orphaned of their father's guidance. In Our heart, which shared the terrible anxiety of innumerable families, and knowing well the imperious duties laid on Us by the sublime mission of peace and love entrusted to Us in such sad times, We at once conceived the firm intention to consecrate all Our activity and all Our power to reconcile the belligerent peoples; and of that We made solemn promises to the Divine Saviour Who willed to make all men brothers at the price of His Blood.

The first words which We, as Supreme Pastor of souls, spoke to the nations and their rulers were of peace and love. Our counsel was affectionate and insistent, both as father and friend, but it was not listened to. Sadness grew in Us, but Our intention did not weaken; We turned with trust to the Almighty, Who has in His hand the minds and hearts both of subjects and kings, invoking from Him the cessation of the awful scourge. We desired that all the faithful should join in Our fervid and humble prayer, and, to render it more efficacious, We ordained that it should be accompanied by works of Christian penitence. But today, on the sad anniversary of the outbreak of the tremendous conflict, the desire that the war may cease soon comes from Our heart more warmly, Our fatherly cry for peace more strongly. May this cry overcome the fearful crash of arms and reach the peoples now at war and their chiefs, inclining both the one side and the other to more kindly and serene counsels.

In the holy name of God, in the name of our Heavenly Father and Lord, by the blessed Blood of Jesus, the price of human redemption, We conjure you whom Divine Providence has called to govern the fighting nations to put an end once for all to this awful carnage, which has already been dishonouring Europe for a year. It is brothers' blood which is being poured out on sea and land. The best soil of Europe, garden of the world, is sown with corpses and ruins; where a short time ago flourished the industry of the workshop, the fruitful labour of the fields, now cannon thunders awfully, and in its fury of destruction does not spare village and city, sows havoc and death everywhere. You bear before God

and men the tremendous responsibility of peace and war; listen to Our prayer, the paternal voice of the Vicar of the Eternal and Supreme Judge, to Whom you must give an account of your public doings as of your private actions.

The copious riches which God the Creator has given to the lands subject to you make possible for you the continuation of the strife; but at what cost? Answer, the thousands of young lives spent every day on the battlefields; answer, the ruins of so many cities and villages, so many monuments which you owe to the piety and genius of your ancestors. And the bitter tears poured out in the privacy of the domestic hearth, or, joined with prayer, at the foot of altars—do not these, too, repeat that the price of the long-drawn-out struggle is great, too great?

Nor let it be said that this huge conflict cannot be settled without the violence of arms. Let each put aside the purpose of destruction, and reflect that nations do not die; impatiently they bear the yoke put on them, preparing for revenge, and handing down from generation to generation a miserable heritage of hatred and vengeance.

Why not now think with calm conscience of the rights and just aspirations of the peoples? Why not initiate, with goodwill, an exchange of views, direct or indirect, in order to take account of those rights and aspirations as far as possible, and so succeed in putting an end to the awful strife, as has happened in similar circumstances before? Blessed be he who first shall raise the olive branch, and give his right hand to the enemy, offering reasonable conditions of peace. The equilibrium of the world and the prosperous and sure tranquillity of the nations rest on mutual benevolence, and on respect for the rights and dignity of others, more than on the multitude of armed forces and a formidable ring of fortresses.

This is the cry of peace which comes from Our heart more strongly on this sad day; and We invite all who are the friends of peace in the world to help Us in hastening the end of the war, which for a year has made of Europe one vast battlefield. May Jesus in His mercy, through the intercession of His Sorrowful Mother, bring about that at last may rise, after so awful a tempest, the calm and radiant dawn of peace, image of His Divine countenance. May there be heard soon the hymns of gratitude to the Most High, Giver of all good, for the happy reconciliation of the States; may the peoples return, in the brotherhood of love, to the peaceful rivalry of studies, arts, and industries, and when the rule of right is restored, may they resolve to entrust for the future the solution of their differences, not to the drawn sword, but to reasons of equity and justice, studied with the necessary calm thought. This will be their finest and most glorious conquest.

With the dear hope and trust that such desirable fruit of the tree of peace may come soon to comfort the world. We impart the Apostolic Benediction to all who form the mystic flock entrusted to Us, and also for those who do not yet belong to the Roman Church. We pray the Lord to bring them close to Us with bonds of perfect love.

BENEDICT XV, POPE.